

born again by xxcaribbean

Category: Stranger Things (TV 2016)

Genre: Angst, M/M

Language: English

Relationships: Billy Hargrove/Steve Harrington

Status: Completed

Published: 2017-12-24

Updated: 2017-12-24

Packaged: 2022-04-03 15:01:11

Rating: Teen And Up Audiences

Warnings: Creator Chose Not To Use Archive Warnings

Chapters: 1

Words: 1,280

Publisher: archiveofourown.org

Summary:

in which billy thinks it's bullshit.

born again

Author's Note:

based on [this](#) prompt.

They all have their triggers, things that set them off, that remind them of a tangible time they'd like to forget. It's not uncommon what with all they've seen, the horror and the blood and a world that never should've existed in the first place.

The kids had theirs, the screech of demodogs and the squelch of goo the Upside Down had left behind, trailing their dreams like visages ready to consume them whole.

Then, Nancy had her gun, the only trigger she came close to. She also had Jonathan, and Jonathan had Nancy, and while she'd dealt with the reality of a dead friend, she'd always been strong enough not to be afraid of much, like the knowledge in her books wielded her an advantage that none of them had.

Joyce and Hopper had theirs, too. Past and present colliding, the years they'd known each other without constant contact, to the sudden war path they forged just to keep a group of kids safe, for Joyce to keep her son safe.

And Billy, who had known nothing of *that* world or *that* time, who hadn't learned about any of it until he did and took it at face value rather than writing Steve and the kids off like they were maniacs. It wasn't *that* place that did him in, though, but the crack of a palm meeting skin or a boot too heavy across the floor.

But Steve, well, his is another story.

He thought maybe he'd been broken, days, weeks, months without a reflection of the cacophony that'd followed them all. Sure, he blinked at the shadows in the corners of every room, and on the occasion he'd have a nightmare, but Steve thought it wary to admit that he was *fine*.

He was fine until he wasn't because-

"This is bullshit, Steve."

He stares, slack-jawed and tense as Billy snarls at him with visceral hate he hasn't seen in months. It makes sense, Steve thinks, because Billy's lip is busted, blood congealing as the minutes tick by. His eye will swell black and blue, and Steve's seen him broken but not like this, not like a wounded animal coiled tight with Steve as the only outlet for aggression.

There had been a time once before, but that was different. This was different. All those months have led back to this, back to nothing, and Steve simply can't fucking *breathe*.

It takes him a second, realizes the laughter that rings out is his own, a jaded guttural reaction to the clicking of Billy's teeth, to the nails digging into the palm of his hands as he curls his fists tighter.

"Fuck you," he spits just as harshly because maybe, just maybe this is finally his breaking point. "If it was really *bullshit* you wouldn't be here right now."

"No, I came to tell you how fucked up this is, Harrington," Billy counters, with a calculated grin, going through the motions of another episode. "We're fucked up, and it's *bullshit*."

It cuts, that word, like a knife straight down his body. He feels pinpricks, and his lungs fill, and Steve could *scream* about how none of this is fair, that he hadn't asked for this; none of them had asked for this.

The obliviousness he emulated over a year ago seems pertinent, a deep-seated wish he wants, where he blinks and goes back in time because it was easy.

But when had things ever been easy?

He thinks of everything, and hates himself, how standing in front of Billy makes him weak, that the anger sizzling underneath his skin burns red-hot, and yet he can't do anything about it. There is no fight left in him, and if he wishes Billy had no eyes and a million teeth, he

thinks he'd be better off than staring at a blank, dead-eyed boy who's telling him that what they had meant nothing.

It's bullshit. You're bullshit.

Steve should be stronger than this by now, but as he looks away from Billy for the first time since he landed on his doorstep, he feels the tears well and the burn in his throat.

Without meaning to, his face falls, and Steve had tried; he'd tried to keep himself composed against Billy's words, wouldn't let this ruin him a second time. But Steve's tired, and he's worn out, and he wonders what he's done wrong this time for someone else to leave him.

He doesn't say anything even though he should argue with Billy until he's blue in the face about how Billy's full of shit, and he doesn't believe him. But Steve won't do that, can't do it because he's emotionally spent.

"Steve-"

He shakes his head, bites his tongue and knows better than to continue to entertain the unnecessary drama, but Steve's not always been wise, and when the inevitable silence finally gets to him, he says, "If you didn't want to see me anymore, you should've led with that."

Something on his face gives him away, and the only reason Steve knows this is because Billy's expression dramatically changes. The furrow in his brow, the cock of his head like he's realizing something he hadn't before. "He said-"

And Steve knows this, knows deep down that Billy knows how to push people away. It's the opposite of everything Steve's ever learned, tried to reel them in and keep them close, form bonds he thought were unbreakable until the smallest of cracks told him otherwise.

He's mad, angry, yes, at Billy for the audacity, but even more so that Billy would *listen*. Steve knows self-sabotage. He's been there plenty

of times before, but he thought maybe they'd be better than that, could be better than that.

So, when his shoulders sag, and he breathes in deep, Steve licks his lips and says, "I don't give a shit what he said," which comes out harsh, like another bite, but Steve doesn't care. If he's already lost, then what more does he have to lose? "I care that he hurt you, but I don't give a shit what he said, Billy. You listen to me when I tell you none of this was bullshit, and if you truly believe that, then I need you to get the fuck out *for good*."

The ultimatum hangs in the air, and part of Steve feels guilty for it, having Billy choose amidst the abuse he couldn't help - the emotional, the physical. But the difference here is that Billy's terrified of what they have, scared of it being good versus what Nancy couldn't bother to admit even to herself, that it wasn't good enough.

Bullshit is Steve's trigger, but he refuses to let it ruin him.

Waiting Billy out doesn't take long, for his eyes to drop as their breathing comprises the heaviness in the room. Steve waits because he's waited before, and he looks at Billy because he cares too much.

And finally, when the edge of his words have sunk too deep, Billy moves forward, too quickly for Steve to react until his arms are full of another body and wet *I'm sorrys* fill the crook of his neck.

Steve wraps Billy in a hug so tight, he's not sure he ever wants to let go, feels the difference in their sizes even though Billy seems so small under the heave of his shoulders and the silent tears that soak Steve's shirt. He hurts, and he aches because tonight is still fresh, but when Billy's fingers curl into his shirt, Steve knows he'll forgive him.

It might take some time; he knows that much, but he also knows he'll be all the better for it.